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An Impartial
ACCOUNT
Of the late
TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
DISSENTERS,

76

In reference to their
Committee and Deputations,

With proper
REFLECTIONS

In ANSWER to the
REMARKS on the Letter to the
Deputies, and the Right of the
Committee consider'd.

*Ornatius causam suam dici non voluit, quam simplex ratio ve-
satis ferebat. Cicer. de Orat. 1.*

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Printed by J. R. B. at the Office of the
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A N

ANSWER to the *Remarks on a Letter to the Deputies, &c.*

THE great Point which the Remarker hath asserted, and undertaken to prove, is this: That the Care of the Committee was not limited to the Question, *When, and in what manner to apply for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and to report their Opinion to a general Meeting of the Deputies*; but they were chosen as a Committee without Limitation to any particular Business, or how long they were to subsist; i. e. they were chosen a Committee to manage all the Affairs of the Dissenters, and to last for ever.

Now, in order to give a full Account of this Matter, and to shew the Knowledge, and Impartiality, of this Remarker, I shall lay together all the Facts relating to this Affair, as far as they are come to my Hands, beginning at that which gave Rise to the whole.

B

August

August 22, 1732. Mr. Chandler wrote the following Letter to Mr. James Read.

Dear Sir,

Several Ministers being met this Day, have desired me to write to you, that you would summon the Committee to meet upon an Affair of Importance, on Tuesday next, at Three a Clock, at ———

Your affectionate Friend,

August 22, 1732.

Sam. Chandler.

August 29, the Committee of Ministers met, in pursuance of the foregoing Letter, and Dr. William Harris, and Mr. George Smyth, reported to them, That they had been desired, by a considerable Number of their Brethren, to propose to them, whether they do not judge it adviseable that a considerable Number of Gentlemen, of principal Weight and Figure, of the three Denominations, shou'd meet and consult what Steps are fit to be taken with relation to the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, the next ensuing Sessions of Parliament.

The Committee, with great Decency, and with a due regard to their Constituents, replied to Dr. Harris and Mr. Smyth, That the Affair reported to them being of so great

great Importance, and the annual Meeting of the general Body being near at hand, they could not, AS A COMMITTEE, think proper to give their Advice.

This annual Meeting of the general Body of the Ministers of the three Denominations, was held *October* the 3d, 1732. when a Question was put, and carried, *That the Civil Affairs, relating to the general Interest, be referred to Gentlemen.* But as this did not seem particular enough to many present, a farther Motion was made, *That the Question proposed by Dr. Harris and Mr. Smyth to the Committee, shou'd be put; viz. Whether it be not adviseable that a considerable Number of Gentlemen shou'd meet and consult what Steps are fit to be taken, with relation to the Repeals, the next ensuing Sessions of Parliament.* And after long Debates, and great Opposition, and frequent calling out for an Adjournment, the said Question was put, and carried in the Affirmative. For the Truth of this, I appeal to the Minute Book of the Reverend Committee.

When in consequence of that Vote, it was proposed to name some Gentlemen on the Spot, who shou'd be first desired to think of this Affair, a very worthy Minister said, as I am informed, that he thought that Trouble might be spared, *for that it was a Treaty which would execute itself.* Accordingly some Gentlemen soon after met in *Finch*

Lane, to the number of about Nineteen, where the Affair of the Repeal was talked of, and was the only thing taken into their Consideration. But as they were so few, they would not take on them to determine any thing in the Case, but to procure a larger number of Gentlemen to consider the Affair. The Result of this was the first Meeting at *Silver Street*.

At this first Meeting at *Silver Street*, Mr. *Holden* made a short Speech, and told the Gentlemen assembled, *that it was well understood, that the design of the Meeting was to consider of an application to Parliament this Session for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts*; upon which a Committee was moved for and appointed, *to consider when, and in what manner to apply for the Repeal of the said Acts, and to report their Opinion to the next Meeting*. And for this I appeal to the Minutes of the Committee themselves. And accordingly in the *Courant* Dec. 1st. 1732. they are called, *The Committee chosen to consider, when and in what manner to apply for the Repeal, or Explanation of the Corporation and Test Acts*. So well did those Gentlemen then understand the original Design of their Appointment.

In the second Meeting at *Silver Street*, Nov. 29th. 1732. the Generality not agreeing to the Opinion of their Committee, the Committee gave up their Trust, all except
Three.

Three. The Meeting received their Resignation, and named seventeen Gentlemen as part of a new Committee. But the resigning Gentlemen expressing their Willingness to serve again, the Generality with great Complaisance were pleased to accept them, and added Four other Gentlemen to their number.

When this new Committee was chosen, they were *chosen only to reconsider the Affair*, when, and in what Manner to apply for the Repeals, *with an express Exception* made by the Gentlemen who had resigned, and afterwards declared themselves willing to resume, *against any other Affair for them to give their Report on*. And for the Truth of this, I appeal to an Evidence, which, if I am rightly informed, Mr. Holden himself hath declared Authentick. I mean the before mentioned *Courant* of Dec. 1st, 1733, in which is inserted the following Account.

“ The Committee *chosen to consider when*
 “ *and in what Manner to apply for the Re-*
 “ *peal or Explanation of the Corporation,*
 “ *and Test Acts*, reported to the Generality
 “ on Wednesday Night, as their Opinion,
 “ *That if it was attempted at present, it*
 “ *was not likely to be successfull*. After
 “ long Debates, the Majority did not agree
 “ therewith, and moved to re-commit that
 “ Opinion. *All the Committee except Lord*
 “ B — n *discharged themselves in a hand-*
 lom

“ som manner from that Trust, tho’ prest
 “ by the same Persons who disagreed with
 “ their Opinion. Upon which Lord B—
 “ and some others moved for a new Com-
 “ mittee, which could not be agreed on,
 “ and then they returned to their earnest In-
 “ treaties that the old Committee would re-
 “ consider this Affair : Which was unani-
 “ mously agreed to, with an Addition of
 “ Four, approved by the Committee. *Pro-*
 “ *vided nothing farther should be added for*
 “ *them to report upon.* In order to avoid the
 “ Inconveniencies and Disorders which at-
 “ tend such General Meetings, the Commit-
 “ tee are to report only to two Persons de-
 “ puted by every Congregation of the Pro-
 “ testant Dissenters, in and about the City
 “ of London.”

Mr. Holden, in pursuance of this Order giv-
 en to the Committee by the Generality, sent
 the following Letter, the Original of which I
 have now before me, thus superscribed.

For the Reverend Mr. Samuel Chandler,
Secretary to the Ministers of the three
Denominations, in and about the City of
London.

S I R,

THIS serves to enclose you a Resolution
of the Meeting of the 29th of November
last, in Silver Street ; as also another of their
Com-

Committee, to desire the Favour of you to communicate them to the respective Ministers of each Congregation of the three Denominations, within ten Miles of London.

I am, S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

Decemb. 1. 1732.

Samuel Holden.

The two Resolutions were as follows.

“ At a general Meeting in *Silver Street*,
“ the 29th of *November* last, it was resolved,
“ that it be an Instruction to the Committee,
“ to report their Opinion to two
“ Persons, chosen out of each Dissenting
“ Congregation of the three Denominations,
“ by the Contributors, within ten Miles of
“ *London*.

“ At a Meeting of the Committee, on
“ *Friday* the 1st of *December*, 1732, it was
“ resolved that a Letter be written to the
“ Secretary of the three Denominations, inclosing
“ the Resolution of the Meeting at
“ *Silver Street*, *November* 29, desiring the
“ said Ministers to communicate it to their
“ respective Congregations, in order to their
“ choosing two Persons according to the said
“ Resolution, and to return a List of the
“ Persons so chosen to the Chairman, attested

“ ed by the Minister of each Congregation,
 “ or other proper Persons where there is a
 “ Vacancy.”

Mr. *Chandler* upon receiving Mr. *Holden's* Letter, with the inclosed Resolutions, procured a Meeting of the Committee of Ministers *December 5. 1732.* in which he produc'd the said Letter and Resolutions sent him by Mr. *Holden*, and they were pleased to comply with the said Resolutions, and sent the underwritten Letter to each Minister of the three Denominations.

S I R,

THE Committee of the three Denominations have received the Resolution of the Committee of Gentlemen desiring each Congregation to choose two Persons TO RECEIVE THEIR REPORT, and have agreed to comply with it. And 'tis thought proper that the Minister of each Congregation should signify the Names of the two Persons, as soon as chosen, in a Letter to Samuel Holden Esq; at Carpenters Hall London Wall, and also to send a Certificate with each of the said two Persons to the Meeting.

Dec. 5. 1732.

The. Mole Secretary.

In

In consequence of this the Deputies were chosen, and all of them to receive the Report of the Committee, and most of them for that Purpose only. Some few Congregations were indeed so pleased with the Method of transacting their Affairs by Deputies, that they chose them for a Year, in Hopes that the other Congregations would soon be brought into the same Scheme, in order to their better Union and Strength, for the future.

On Friday Dec. 29. 1732. the Deputies met at *Salter's Hall*, when Mr. *Holden* in the beginning of his Speech said to them, Gentlemen, *This is the most regular assembly, which (as far as I know) the Dissenters ever held;* and after having assured the Deputies, that since the recommitting the Affair, the Committee had spared no Pains to enable them the better to form their Judgment; he tells them he was directed to report the Opinion of the Committee as follows.

Resolved, *That an Application to Parliament the ensuing Sessions for a Repeal or Explanation of the Corporation and Test Acts is not likely to be attended with Success,*

Resolved, *That upon this Consideration, such an Application is by no means advisable.*

The Majority of the Assembly acquiesced in this Report; and having desired the

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Gentlemen

Gentlemen appointed to reconsider the Affair of the Repeal, to send the said Resolutions, with such Letters as they should think proper into the Country, they dismissed themselves; the only Affair for which they were convened, being entirely concluded; and without giving the Committee any, &c. instructions. And for this I appeal to the Courant of Dec. 30. 1732. where this Matter is truly related.

“ Then the said Assembly (of Deputies)
 “ after mature Consideration and Debate, in
 “ the most temperate and decent Manner,
 “ almost unanimously agreed, to the said
 “ Report, and desired them (the Committee)
 “ to send the said Resolutions, with such
 “ Letters as they shall think proper, into
 “ the Country”.

The Gentlemen accordingly wrote their Letters to such Places as they thought proper, and received suitable Answers to them from *Bristol, Liverpoole*, and other Places, which I have now Copies of before me, and which may be publish'd in due time; and it is remarkable that the Committee was never once summoned together to have any of these Answers from the Country communicated to them; nor indeed upon any other Occasion for above twelve Months together.

Some of the Dissenting Ministers, who had been principally concerned in the Vote, that the civil Affairs relating to the general
 interest

interest of the Dissenters should be refered to Gentlemen, believing that they had now neither a subsisting Committee or Deputation, obtain'd that the Affair of a new Deputation might be propos'd to the Committee of Ministers; and after the Matter had been regularly debated in that Committee, they come to the following Agreement. Oct. 8. 1733.

That it be inquired at the next general Meeting of Ministers, whether it is their Judgment to recommend to their Respective Congregations a new choice of Deputies at the Expiration of an Year from the time when the last were chosen.

And accordingly at the next annual Meeting of the general Body, Oct. 16. 1733. every Minister of the three Denominations being ordered to be Summoned, the said Minute of their Committee was read, when the following Resolution was agreed to by a Majority of at least two to one.

That it is the Opinion of this Meeting, that it be recommended by the Ministers of the three Denominations to their respective Congregations, that they choose two Deputies for the Year ensuing, for the Management of the Civil Affairs relating to the Protestant Dissenters.

After this Vote of the general Body of Ministers, several Conferences were enter'd into between some Ministers, and some of the Gentlemen of the old Committee.

Many proposals were made about communicating the above Resolution of Oct. 16. to the Ministers of each Congregation. The last proposal was this, which would have been agreed to by the Ministers, but was rejected by all the Gentlemen consulted, except Mr. *Holden*, who declared himself willing to comply with it. *viz.* That the Ministers and Gentlemen should each of them send their Respective notices of the Resolution of the general Meeting of Ministers Oct. 16. to each particular Minister of the three Denominations, and that the notices given by each should be exactly in the same words that they might have the Appearance of Union and Concert.

When this reasonable Proposal was rejected, and only for this Reason, because it did not seem fully to own the Power and Existence of the old Committee; the Chairman and Secretary of the General Body of Ministers, agreed to send the following Letter to every Minister of the three Denominations.

London, Nov. 1733.

Reverend Sir,

AT the Annual Meeting of the Protestant dissenting Ministers of the three Denominations, Oct. 16, 1733. Resolved,

That it is the Opinion of this Meeting, that it be recommended by the Ministers of
the

the three Denominations, to their respective Congregations, that they choose Two Deputies for the Year ensuing, for the Management of the Civil Affairs relating to the Protestant Dissenters.

“ In pursuance of the said Resolution, you
 “ are desired to recommend the said Choice
 “ of two Deputies to your Congregation,
 any Day in the Month of *December*, as
 shall best suit their Circumstances.

Your Humble Servants,

Jos. Denham Moderator.

Sam. Chandler Secretary.

Agreeably to this Notice, many of the Congregations of Protestant Dissenters chose their Deputies. The Deputies when chosen, met as they had Opportunity to consider of the End and Reasons of their Choice, and when they had received Information that the Generality of their Fellow Deputies were elected, a very considerable Number of them, thirty five met, and agreed to desire the whole Body of them to meet *Jan. the 28th, 1733-4, at Pinners Hall.*

They accordingly met to about the Number of One hundred and twenty ; but instead of the Order and Decency that might have been expected from such a Meeting of
 Gentlemen

Gentlemen, some of them, I will not say in what manner, interrupted the Proceedings of the Assembly, and would suffer no Chairman to be chosen, nor divide whether a Chairman should be chosen or not, that the Design of their Meeting might be opened to them. And after a great deal of Disorder, broke from, and left the rest of their Brethren the Deputies.

However a very considerable number of them, sixty two, still remained, and chose Capt. *James Winter* their Chairman, and adjourn'd for a Fortnight, to *Feb.* the 11th.

During this Adjournment, nine of the Deputies signed a Letter to Mr. *Holden*, as Chairman of the old Committee, desiring him to summon the said Committee upon an Affair of great Importance.

The Chairman in obedience to this Letter, signed only by nine Deputies, summoned the Committee; Seventeen of them met, Seven of which having enquired of Mr. *Holden*, Whether he summon'd them as a private Gentleman, or as Chairman of the late Committee; and being told he did it as Chairman to the Committee, declared their Opinion that the Committee did not subsist, and could no longer act in that Character. Four of the Seven, after having made their Protest, actually left them, and tho' the other Three staid behind, they declared it was not that they would vote with them as Members of the

the Committee, but only to assist them with their Advice. And agreeably did not join with them in their resolution as Members of the Committee. So that only Ten of them joined in the Summons for the Deputies to meet at *Salters Hall*, which was not a *Quorum* of the first Committee of twenty one, much less of the second Committee of twenty five, of which the *Quorum* had, till this time, ever been thirteen.

And yet this small number of Ten out of seventeen declare in their Summons to the Deputies, that it was *unanimously resolved* at a Meeting of the Gentlemen of the Committee, that the Deputies of the several Congregations of the Protestant Dissenters of the three Denominations, be desired to meet at *Salters Hall*, on *Wednesday*, the 6th of *February*.

This Summons was by some obeyed, who in opposition to the former Meeting of their Brethren *attended* the Committee *with their Advice*, during the Interval of the Adjournment from *Pinner's Hall*.

Mr. *Holaen*, as usual, takes the Chair, whether with, or without a Vote, I am not able to determine, and after a Speech to the Assembly, it was resolved by them, that the Old Committee doth subsist, and be desired to continue for an Year, and that the next Committee be chosen out of the Deputies or others, with some other things, for which I refer to their printed Resolutions.

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However these Resolutions did not intimidate, as was imagined, the Body of Deputies at *Pinner's Hall* from Meeting according to their Adjournment on *Monday, Feb. the 11th*, when Capt. *James Winter* being in the Chair, they resolved amongst other things to choole a Committee of fifteen Gentlemen by Ballot, on *Wednesday the 20th*, which they accordingly did at the Time and Place appointed.

This is, as far as I can learn, a faithful Narrative of this whole Affair. And I think from this short Account, 'tis easy to answer every Objection and Cavil of the Remarker. His first is this.

1. He says, page the 4th, *That the Letter takes no Notice, that before the two Meetings at Silver Street, at a very full Meeting of the London Ministers, it was their Desire, that the Care of the Civil Affairs of the Protestant Dissenters might be committed into the Hands of Gentlemen, and that a Care to act upon this Desire of the Ministers produced the Meetings at Silver Street.*

The Ministers are much obliged to those who were so careful to act upon their Desire. However the Remarker is out in his Observation, that a Care to act upon the Desire of the Ministers, *that the Civil Affairs of the Protestant Dissenters in General, might be committed into Hands of Gentlemen, produced the Meetings at Silver Street.*

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That Desire of the Ministers would never have produced any Effects, had not *the other Question*, proposed by Dr. *Harris* and Mr. *Smith* to the Committee of Ministers, been carried; *viz. That the Affair of the Repeals in particular should be committed to Gentlemen.* This was *that Treaty which it was declared would execute itself.* 'Twas this Resolution that produced the Meeting in *Finch Lane*, where the Subject debated was, not the Affairs of the Dissenters in general, but that of the Repeals in particular. To consider this Subject only, the first Meeting was procured at *Silver Street*, which Mr. *Holden* himself publicly declared, when he told the Gentlemen then assembled, that *'twas well understood, that the Design of the Meeting was to consider of an Application to Parliament, for the Repeal of the Test-Act;* and for this alone the first Committee at *Silver Street* was appointed, called in the *Courant* of Dec. the 1st, 1732. *The Committee chosen to consider, when and in what Manner to apply for the Repeal, &c.* And tho' the Desire of the Ministers might probably give some Rise to the first Consultations of the Gentlemen upon that Important Affair, yet nothing can be more absurd, than to alledge, that this had any Influence upon the Meetings at *Silver Street*, to engage them to chose a Committee, without Limitation of Time or Business; since the Ministers were

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never

never publickly mentioned at either of those Meetings; nor their Desire so much as known to the Generality who met there; and especially when such abundant Evidence can be given, to prove that they were actually chosen for one single Purpose only.

2. He observes, *That at the Meetings at Silver Street, some Gentlemen were chosen as a Committee, without Limitation to any particular Business, or Intimation how long they were to subsist.* This is roundly asserted, but how truly, I leave others to judge. As to the first of those Meetings, I have already proved the contrary. The Affairs of the Dissenters in general were never so much as talked of then, much less committed to the Care of the Committee. And as to the second, 'tis an Instance of much greater Assurance to affirm it. When the Gentlemen then met had chosen a new Committee, they chose them *only to reconsider the Affair of the Repeals*, with an express Proviso, *That nothing farther should be added for them to report upon.* Their Opinion in this Affair only the General Body order'd them to report to Deputies. The Resolution of that Body for the Committee to report their Opinion to Deputies was communicated by Mr. Holden himself, to the Secretary of the Ministers of the three Denominations, to be by him communicated to his Brethren, in order to their choosing two Persons according to the

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the said Resolution. The Secretary of the Committee of Ministers sent his Notices to each Minister for the Choice of two Deputies *to receive their Report*; and the Generality of the Ministers in their Return to Mr. Holden, as I am inform'd, actually mentioned their being chosen to receive it. What Demonstration can be stronger, than that the Committee was chosen at the second Meeting at *Silver Street*, and believed by themselves, and by the whole Body of the Dissenters, Ministers and People, to be chosen only to report their Opinion about the Repeals to the Deputies? And what must the Man be, who in Opposition to all this Evidence, can affirm, that they were chosen as a Committee, *without Limitation as to Business, or Time*? If this was the Case, and if the Affair of the Repeal, was *as the most concerning Affair* in particular referred to the Committee, it will appear in the Minutes of the Committee; and to those Minutes I appeal, and apprehend the Gentlemen of the Committee are concerned in Honour to clear up the Affair, by producing such a Minute publicly, if there be one. And this is a full and direct Answer to the Remarkers first Query, which runs thus, *Whether the Desire of the London Ministers, the several Acts of the Deputies, and Declarations of the several Congregations of Protestants Dissenters, do not shew that the Care of the Committee was*

not limited to the *Question when, and in what Manner to apply for the Repeal, &c.* For the Desire of the *London Ministers*, the Trust given by the two Meetings at *Silver Street*, the very Letters and Conduct of the Committee themselves, the Choice of the Congregations in *London*, and the Acts of the Deputies, do demonstrate, that the Care of the Committee was absolutely limited to the Affair of the Repeals, and that therefore it ceased immediately upon making their Report.

3. The Remarker asserts, *That the Body of Dissenters, in this new Form of Deputation, owned the Committee, and received its Report, desired the Committee to go on by writing Letters, &c. were adjourned, and expected, as was intimated to them, to be called together again by the Committee, if any thing proper to be laid before them, should make it convenient.*

But in answer to this, let it be observed, that tho the Deputation own'd them as the Committee chosen at *Silver Street*, to report their Opinion about the Repeals, yet not one single Man of the Deputies own'd them as a Committee chosen *without Limitation of Time or Business*; and for this I appeal to every single Gentleman of that Deputation, and to the Minutes of the Committee, whether they have entered such an Acknowledgment as this. Nor indeed could the Deputation,

tion, if they had been inclined to do it, have given them such an unlimited Power. For the far greater Number of them were chosen by their Congregations, only to receive the Report of the Committee. A few others of them were chosen only for an Year, and of consequence could never appoint a Committee, for the Management of Affairs, which their Congregations had never intrusted them with, nor to continue longer than the Time of their own Choice.

Nor did they desire the Committee to go on to write *Letters with an &c.* This is an Affirmation without any Voucher. The contrary is evident from the Passage in the *Covenant of Dec.* the 30th, before mentioned p. 12. and from the Minutes of the Committee, in which I am perswaded there was no such &c. originally added. The writing Letters into the Country, was a merely incidental Thing, and that it was not done by them as a Committee, is evident from the Committee's never being summoned to receive the Answers to them.

As to the Intimation that they (the Deputies) should be called together again, 'twas at best an Intimation only, and their Right to do it never confirmed by the Deputies Vote.

But the Remarker thinks *there was no need to ascertain every Particular by Express Vote. These are needless Forms in Voluntary Societys of Friendship.* What, is there

there no need for a Body of two Hundred Men, representing many Thousands, to ascertain who shall be their Committee, and what Affairs that Committee shall be entrusted with by express Vote? Doth this Gentleman think that Voluntary Societies of Friendship can be kept up without those Forms which are essential to them?

A Vote for the Choice of a Committee is surely more than a Matter of Form, a thing essentially necessary to constitute them, or the Managers of any Society, and when Men will put themselves into the Management of the Affairs of others, without their express Vote or Leave, this must *tend to destroy that Mutual Trust and Confidence in the Members of Societies, which alone can make such Societies of any Service;* and the Apprehension of this is the thing which hath now actually divided the Dissenters.

'Tis a great Presumption against the Subsistence of the Committee after their Report to the Deputies at *Salters Hall*, that several of the Committee themselves, Gentlemen of as good Fortune, as known Integrity, and of as allowed Interest amongst the Dissenters as any of those who assert the Right of the Committee have actually disclaim'd that Right, and protested against the subsisting Power of the Committee, and refused to join in their Summons of the Deputies to *Salters Hall*: Gentlemen who cannot be supposed either

to be Ignorant of the Reasons why the Committee was originally chosen, or to have any Interest or private Views to byass them against what they apprehend to be the true Interest of the Dissenters. And methinks it would have been an Instance of Equity, Justice, and Honour, had the Right of the Committee been first settled among the Gentlemen of the Committee themselves, before any of them had presumed to act in that Capacity, when so considerable a Number of their own Body, could not agreeably with their own Sentiments concur with them.

But supposing this Intimation actually given by the Committee, and received by the Deputies, that the Deputies shou'd be called together again, if there was any thing proper to be laid before them; How will the Gentlemen of the Committee excuse themselves as to the Affair of the Repeal of the *Irish* Act, which was promised by a very great Man, as an Earnest of future Favours to the Dissenters in *England*? Was not this a Thing proper to be laid before the Deputies? Why did not the Committee consult them, whether 'twas proper to enforce the Application of the *Irish* Dissenters, with the whole Weight of the Body of the Dissenters in *England*? Hath not that Affair shamefully miscarried? Where is this boasted, this frequently promised

miscd Pledge ? Are the Dissenters thus to be treated in the Face of a new Election ?

— *Manifesta Fides, Danaumque patefcunt Insidia.* —

I know 'tis remarked in a Speech, said to be Mr. *Holden's*, in the *Courant* of Feb. the 7th, 1733. *That the Interest which the Committee have with Gentlemen in Power, hath been improved wholly for the Service of the Dissenters.* One Instance of which is Mr. *Dodridge* of *Northampton*, who wrote to Mr. *Holden*, and another Gentleman, of his being under a Prosecution, and that they made a Representation of that Affair, and so far succeeded, as to obtain a Prohibition.

But to this I answer, that the obtaining the Prohibition, by whatsoever Interest with Gentlemen in Power it was obtained, was not obtained by any Act of the Committee, who were never once summoned about it ; and what is of more Importance is, that that Prohibition was not obtained by any Interest of any one of the Committee, with Gentlemen in Power, but by due Course of Law, in a Court where the Noble Lord who presides in it, and his Associates, are never to be influenced against Law by Men in Power, and need no Influence of Men in Power, to do Justice according to Law, to those who are injured either by Civil or Spiritual Tyranny. No: the Judges
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of that Honourable Court have acted strictly according to Justice ; and in this, as well as in all other Cases, have trod in the Steps of their learned Predecessors, who have constantly granted Prohibitions in the like Circumstances, ever since the Restoration, whenever they have been applied for. Nor can one Instance be produced of such a Prohibition being denied. It is a Mistake therefore to imagine that the Dissenters have in this instance receiv'd any Favour from Men in Power.

But if all these Observations of the Remarker should happen to be insufficient to support the Existence of the old Committee, he hath a *Sheet Anchor* still to trust to ; which is, that upon the late Desire of a new Choice, the far greater Number of Congregations returned their Choice of new Deputies, or signified the Continuance of the old ones, to the Chairman of the Committee ; and that a Majority of the Committee and Deputies are of that Opinion that the Committee now subsists.

But what if all the Congregations had returned their new Deputies to the Chairman of the old Committee, would this prove that that Committee subsisted, after they had been expired above a twelvemonth ? Or did it give them any new Life or Being as a Committee ? Returns of Members give no Trust to the Persons to whom they are made ; no not
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the Power of calling the Persons so returned together. And this the Chairman himself seemed sensible of, because he did not summon the Deputies together upon Account of the Returns made to him by the Congregations, but by a Desire of *nine Deputies*, after the whole Body of them had been summoned together by thirty five, and met in pursuance of those Summons.

But should it not be told by what Arts and Methods some of these Returns were procured? At a private Meeting of about twenty Ministers, without ever consulting the rest of their Brethren, it was resolved that the old Committee did subsist, and that the Return of Deputies should be made to Mr. *Holden*. And in consequence of this, they sent circular Letters about *to some of their Dependants* to desire them to make their Returns to him, and to insert this Clause in the Certificates they gave their Deputies, *That they will be ready to attend the Summons of the Gentlemen of the Committee*. A Conduct this the more unpardonable, in that not one of those Ministers, who voted the Existence of the Committee, in a private Club, ventured to open their Mouths in Favour of them, at the General Meeting of the Ministers: except one, who after having asserted the Existence and Power of the Committee, immediately retracted, and said he meant the Deputies; upon a proper Hint from a Brother who

who stood near him, and perceived that such Doctrine was not Orthodox in that Assembly, and that the Preacher of it was going immediately to be reprehended.

It may also be observed with Truth, that some Persons were at *Salters Hall* as Deputies, who were never chosen by any Congregations; and that others were confirmed, and returned to Mr. *Holden*, without ever consulting the Congregation; or having any Regard to the Suffrage of the whole Number of Subscribers.

So that the Remarker hath no Reason to boast of the Number of Congregations who made their Return of Deputies to the said Committee, when he considers the Arts by which those Returns were some of them made: Arts which the Ministers of the other Side were above practising, who were for leaving their own, and other Congregations, to their full Liberty, to choose whom they pleased, and return them as they thought fit; and who durst not presume to pass any Vote, that the Committee did, or did not subsist, because they knew that it was a disputed Case, and not to be determined by the Ministers who had no Hand in choosing them, but by the Gentlemen of the Laity only.

The Choice of the new Deputies was in Conformity to the Vote of the *General Body of the Ministers*, signified to each of them by their Moderator and Secretary; the dat-

ter of whom had an unquestionable Right to give them Notice of that Vote, being the very Person desired by Mr. *Holden* to communicate a like Vote of the Gentlemen met in *Silver Street*; which he accordingly did, without ever being complained of for it, by his Brethren. And as the new Deputation was thus chosen, in Consequence of the Ministers Resolution, and without any Desire, either of the Generality, or Committee of Gentlemen, they had not the least Dependence upon, or Relation to the Old Committee; who when they had given their Report, immediately ceased, and died a natural Death, as all other Committees do, when the Affair for which they are appointed is determined.

The Truth of the Case is, the whole of this Affair proceeded, to say the least, *with great Irregularity*. Nine Deputies take on them to desire by Letter the Committee to meet, and when met, to summon the whole Body of Deputies, thereby giving the Committee a fresh Trust, without any Shadow of Authority. The Committee, tho' divided among themselves, and having only Ten present, out of Twenty five, who looked upon themselves as subsisting, and even in Opposition to the Protest of Seven of their own Number, against their Subsistence, yet issue out their Summons to the Deputies return'd to them, to meet at *Salters Hall*, and to the Ministers who had not return'd to them, to choose their

their Deputies, and return them accordingly ; even after the Deputies had been actually met together in a Body, at *Pinner's Hall*, chosen their Chairman, and adjourned to a proper Time. This is a direct Answer to the third *Quere*, which runs thus. Whether there was not a sufficient Majority of the Committee present, when it met about summoning the Deputies, and a sufficient Majority of those present for the said Summons, being Eleven out of Seventeen, and Eleven being made a Quorum of the whole Committee in the Minutes ? For, if I am informed right, Eleven was the Quorum only of the first Committee of Twenty one, and Thirteen, for the same Reason, a Quorum of the second Committee of Twenty five; and because Seven of those Seventeen declared they could not act with the Committee, as a Body, and therefore reduced the Number of the Committee to Ten; who could not with any Right summon the Deputies, because they were neither a Quorum of Twenty one, or Twenty five.

The summoning the Deputies together at *Salter's Hall* by the old Committee, carried in it the Face of the most absolute and determined Opposition, to those who had met at *Pinner's Hall*; an Opposition it might reasonably be imagined, would not tamely be submitted to. Why were not some previous Attempts made for Peace ? Why was not the Proposal

Proposal accepted, made, as I am informed, by one of the Committee, that Mr. *Holden* and Capt. *Winter*, shou'd join in one Summons of the Deputies, to a common Place of Meeting? Why was it rejected with Contempt? Why did not the Gentlemen at *Pinner's Hall*, who broke off from that Meeting, with great Disorder, suffer a Chairman to be chosen *pro Tempore*, fairly and candidly to debate the Matters in which they differed? Surely the Gentlemen who remain'd at *Pinner's Hall*, were at least Persons of that Consideration, as to deserve a civil and friendly Treatment. They were Deputies, as well as those that left them Deputies of equal rights and powers. Some of them were chosen for some of the principal Congregations in this City, and some of them of equal Fortunes with any of the Gentlemen of the Committee themselves. To what then must I impute that Noise and Clamour, that steady Opposition to all the Orders and Rules of Society, that appear'd amongst many, at the first Meeting at *Pinner's Hall*? I am griev'd for that Conduct, and the unhappy Consequences of it.

If the Gentlemen who came there as Friends of the Old Committee, had but suffered the Affair to be debated, and calmly come to a Vote, whether the Old Committee should subsist, or not, the Affair had been then ended, and a Division rendered impossible; and which ever way the Vote had passed, I am sure
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for my own Part, I shou'd have been contented, and easy. But this was not the Conduct intended. No. Matters must be carried *with an high Hand*, and Contempt be shewn by a scornful breaking off from those, who were not thought worthy to be heard or convinced.

I hear indeed that the Summons of the Thirty five was objected against as irregular. But surely this ought never to be urged by those, who submitted to the Summons of Ten, *of a disputed and divided Committee*, given out at the Desire of Nine Deputies. If the Majority is to carry all Things, the Deputies at *Pinner's Hall* had certainly the best Right to meet, being summoned by Thirty five of their own Body, who had an inherent Right to desire a Meeting of the rest of their Brethren; whereas, had the whole Committee of Twenty five join'd with the Nine Deputies in the Summons to *Salter's Hall*, they would not have been quite equal to that Number.

Here then the first Meeting at *Pinner's Hall* had an evident Advantage, both as to the Number and Right of those, who called them together. 'Tis true, they were deserted by some of their Brethren. But did this Desertion break up the whole Assembly? No. Sixty two remained, and chose their Chairman; and adjourned to a fixed Day, and were thereby constituted the proper Body of the Deputies. If the Gentlemen on the other
side

side of the Question were the Majority, why did they not stay, and try their Strength, and prevent this by a Vote? Which was the most likely way to Peace? What, to break away without a Vote, and to suffer the Chairman to be chosen, and the Adjournment fixed; and in the *interim*, to summon themselves together, in direct Opposition to them? Or to have stay'd, and prevented the Choice of the Chairman, and the Time of the Adjournment? This is a direct Answer to the fifth *Quere*, which runs thus, *When a Majority of Deputies, of equal Rights and Powers, shall declare against any Meeting as irregular, and withdraw from it as such, whether it can be supposed they leave all the Powers of the Deputation, with those who stay? Or that a Minority, in such Circumstances, can represent the Body, by mutual Agreement?* For it was never determined, whether those who went away were the Majority. Had they been sure of that, they would have tried it by a Vote, and broke up the whole Meeting at once. Neither doth their declaring the Meeting irregular, prove it to be so; 'twas a Matter that shou'd have been debated, and determined by a Majority of Votes, which those who went away refused to do. And as they went away voluntarily, without staying for the Vote, or Sense of the Body, they did, according to the Rules of all Regular Societies, leave all the Powers of the Deputation,

tion, with those that stay'd. And those who stay'd, did represent the Body by as mutual an Agreement, as any Number of Men can represent a Body, where all the Members of that Body are not of the same Mind.

When the Adjournment was fixed by a Vote, 'twas impossible the Deputies shou'd not come together in Consequence of it; and therefore, tho' the Meeting at *Salters Hall*, was as large as 'tis said to be, yet as that Meeting was in direct Opposition to the Body of Deputies met at *Pinner's Hall*, summoned in the Interval of a regular Adjournment, and in itself a very partial One, many refusing to own and comply with the Summons of the Chairman of the Old Committee, I think all their Resolutions can have no Effect; and in Particular, not determine the Grand Question, whether that Committee subsists or not. And I am sorry to observe, that as the Committee, many of them, *resolved to subsist*, tho' they knew some of their own Members, and great Numbers of Gentlemen and Ministers in and about *London*, were of a contrary Opinion; so they have now, some of them, accepted a new Trust as a Committee, upon the Foot of a direct Opposition to them, and upon such a Foundation as hath a Tendency to make a Perpetual and Incurable Division. And this will answer the sixth Query, *Whether an Attempt of a small Number of the Deputies,*

to invest themselves, with the whole Power of the Deputation, in direct Opposition to the exprefs Declaration of a greater Number of Deputies against it, be not a notorious Breach of Union, &c. ? For they were not a small Number of Deputies, nor was there any Division to prove them the lesser Number ; nor did they attempt to invest themselves, with the Power of the whole Deputation. That Power was in them by the Rules of all Societies, notwithstanding the exprefs Declaration of *some fugitive Members* to the contrary, who mistrusted their own Strength, and by a *voluntary Abdication*, refused to put their Numbers to the Trial. And therefore their acting as the Deputation was a Regular Thing, and the calling another Number of Deputies together, in direct Opposition to them, without ever consulting them, or so much as making a single Attempt towards Union or Peace, was *an unprecedented Breach of Union and Concord, had an apparent Tendency to subvert, and ruin the Deputation itself*, and hath actually broken us in such a Manner, as 'tis to be feared will not, without great Condecension and Prudence, be easily forgotten or forgiven.

However, as those Gentlemen have in all other Parts of Life acted with greater Caution and Deference to Mankind, so I promise myself from their Candour, Integrity, and Love to the Dissenting Interest, that they
will

will seriously think of Measures of Peace, and use their best Endeavours to unite upon such Terms as shall be honourable on both Sides, and thus remove the mutual Jealousies that may have obtain'd among the common Friends of Liberty, and disappoint the Hopes of our common Enemies, who flatter themselves with reaping Advantages from our Animosities and Divisions.

And thus, I think, I have obviated all that is material in the Remarks and Queries, excepting only the Second and Seventh Queries; in the last of which, the Remarker says, *That 'tis very civil only to say of Reasonings, from the Powers of Assemblies which have Jurisdiction, to the Powers of such which subsist on mutual Agreement, that they are impertinent.* And therefore without disputing this Matter, he will, I am sure, take it as an instance of my great Civility to him, when I say of his Reasonings in the second *Quere*, from the *Quorum* of the Lords and Commons, to justify Ten being a *Quorum* out of Twenty Four, *only that they are Impertinent*, and therefore he must excuse me from being so Impertinent, as to make any farther Answer.

But I cannot conclude without a few Remarks, in Justification of the Ministers, who are supposed to have had some Hand in promoting the Choice of new Deputies. Many hard Speeches have gone out against them,

and many False and Injurious Charges been thrown on them, even by some whose Characters they value, and for whose Personal Merit they have the highest Respect ; and even the Members of their Congregations have been tampered with, and practised on, who have heard their Ministers represented as Mad-Men to their Faces. But they can chearfully bear up under all this, and be content to do their best to support an Interest, which they love as the Interest of Liberty and Truth ; tho' they lose the Advantages of a National Establishment, and even the Friendship of some, they have always valued as the Pleasure and Happiness of their Lives.

The Reason of the Motion for Deputies, at the Meeting of the Body of the Ministers was the Vote they past in the General Meeting the Year before, *that the Civil Affairs of the Dissenters in General, shou'd be committed to Gentlemen.* They believed the Committee was long since dissolved, and knew that no Deputies were chosen for above an Year ; *and out of Deference to the Judgment of the Lay Gentlemen in Silver Street,* procured a Motion to be made *at the yearly Meeting* of the three Denominations, that every Minister shou'd recommend it to his respective Congregation, to make a new Choice of the Deputies for the ensuing Year. The Motion came from the Committee of Ministers

Ministers of the three Denominations, in an Open, Regular, and Honourable Manner. The Question was carried by at least Two to One, without any sinister Practices, and after a long Debate ; and without taking any Advantage of the Absence of any Persons. For the Summons was General, and no one knew but that those who were absent might attend. And tho a worthy Minister moved, that the Affair might be considered by each of the three Denominations apart, yet as that Motion did not come, till after the Question for the Choice of Deputies had been formed, and resolved to be put, it came too late to be debated or agreed to.

This Vote of the Body of the three Denominations of Ministers, was signified to each Minister in Particular, by those who were their Officers for that Time, and might have been communicated by any single Minister, who wou'd have given himself the Trouble, and 'twould have been an Injustice to every Absent Person, not to have informed him of so Important a Resolution come to by the three Denominations, in a Body.

In what then have any of the Ministers, who had the Choice of Deputies at Heart, been to blame? What! in executing their own Vote, that the civil Affairs of the Dissenters in general should be committed to Gentlemen? They were in good hopes this would never be objected to them as a Crime. Or
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for recommending the Choice of Deputies to their Congregations? Who hath any Right to intermeddle with what is done by a Congregation and their Minister? They acted in conformity to the Vote of *Silver Street*, where the Deputies were agreed to be chosen; and thought they should deserve at least Mr. *Holden's* Commendation, who publickly declared to the first Body of Deputies, *That they were the most regular Assembly, which, as far as he had known, the Dissenters ever held.*

But why was it not agreed to, that the Chairman of the Old Committee should Summon the Deputies in Consequence of the Ministers Vote? It was agreed and consented to by the Ministers, that the Chairman might Summon them if he pleased. They were far from objecting against that, provided they might have the Liberty of sending their own Notices. But some of the Gentlemen of the Committee absolutely refused to join with them, though the Ministers agreed that the Words of each Summons should be exactly the same.

'Tis therefore unreasonable to fix any Blame upon the Ministers upon this Account, who can lay their Hands upon their Hearts, and publickly declare to the World, that they are sure they have been byass'd by no Private Views, nor acted out of a Spirit of Opposition to the Gentlemen of the Committee, whom

whom they greatly value. They can say, what they wish all their Brethren could say, that they have no Dependence on Courtiers, nor *yearly Sums of Money from them, to distribute without Account.* They are Friends to the Interest of Civil and Religious Liberties, and wish nothing more passionately, than the Union and Strength of the Dissenters to promote that Interest, and will do their utmost to prevent the widening our present Differences, and to bring all they converse with, to a forbearing, forgiving, and peaceable Spirit.

They are not indeed for being led implicitly by any, or entrusting any Set of Gentlemen as a Committee *without Limitation to any particular Business, or length of Time.* This they think an Injury to the whole Body of Dissenters, and must beg Leave to oppose all such Attempts, whosoever the Persons be who make them. And notwithstanding the unmannerly Reflections which have been thrown upon them, and the Opposition that hath been made to them, they are pleased to find, they have succeeded in their main Point; and that the Deputies of each Division have agreed to continue the yearly Choice of them. The whole Body of Deputies have justified the Ministers Conduct so far, and the Wisdom of their Vote at the last General Meeting. The Ministers in return, wish them first the most hearty Union
among

among themselves, and in the next Place, the fullest Success in every legal and peaceable Attempt to recover the common Rights of Subjects, to promote the Cause of Liberty and Truth, and the Prosperity of his Majesty's Government and Family.

I shall only add, That as the Remarker takes no Notice of the Disappointment in *Ireland*, he allows the Account in the Letter to be true. I forbear to give that particular Relation of that Affair which I am able to do, only for fear I should raise a Resentment, that I had rather keep down. I hope every Dissenter in *England* will consider the true Interest of the Nation in the next Elections, and be neither cajol'd by those, who have been always in Principle for destroying them and the Liberties of their Country; nor too much trust to others, tho' in profession their Friends, have sometimes sacrificed, and almost always deceived them.

F I N I S.

